nature net

The **Nature***Kenya* Newsletter www.naturekenya.org October 06

World Bird Festival

November '06

The Sarit Centre

Look out for details on **Kim Howell's** talk and book signing

Ecological effects of a hydropower dam & the Kihansi Spray Toad

Talk by Kim M Howell

Tuesday 19 December

Your records needed!

Have you registered to take part in this year's event?

The birdwatch in November is on important opportunity for the collection of data on bird species occurrence and distribution. We need your records! So get prepared - to compete to see the most birds in 24hrs. A list completed during any 24 hours in the month of November can be submitted.

Email <office@naturekenyo.org> if you need a registration form. (You must pair with at least one other registered member for your list to qualify.)

Kenya's birds and birding

at the Sarit Centre Getaway Exhibition

Fri 3 - Sun 5 Nov' '06

Come to the domestic tourism 'Getaway' exhibition at the Sarit Centre for award-winning bird films and talks.

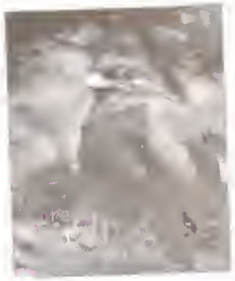
These will take place in the Seminar room each day. Talks include - **Birds of Prey** by Munir Virani, **Birds where you live and work** by Fleur Ng'weno, **Bird Photography** by Paul Benson, **The Conservation of Birds** by Jacob Machekele, **Birding Hotspots** by Koriuki Chege and **Avian Flu** by Muchoi Muchane.

Museum main gate closed!

Use another new entrance about 50 metres along the fence

library re-opens

located at the Natural Sciences Building, National Museums of Kenya, Nairobi (next to the Langi Langi cafeteria) INTERNET AVAILABLE



Great Birding Guaranteed
An introductory pamphlet to birding, which includes a description of all the Important Bird Areas of Kenya @ 150/-

The Bird Song of Kenya and Northern Tanzania
by John Hammick is back in stock
CD with 99 species @ 900/-

Honey from Kinangop, 500 gms and larger @120/- and 180/- respectively

Polo shirts @ 500/- ; **Caps** @ 300/-

OCTOBER AT A GLIMPSE

Sat 14	Tree Walk
Sun 15	Sunday Birdwalk
Thu 19 - Sun 22	Taita Hills trip
Mon 30	Tree Walk

Birdwalks every Wednesday Morning

Taita Hills

Thu 19 - Sun 22 October '06

Bring own sleeping bag, drinking water, good walking/hiking shoes and warm clothing. Depart 9:00 a.m. Thursday 19th. Cost KSh 4000 per person inclusive of transport, food, accommodation and guiding fees. Minimum 10 persons. Book with Nature Kenya by **10th October 2006**.

Castle Forest Lodge

Sat 9 - Mon 11th December '06

The Lodge is two and a half hours drive from Nairobi on the southern foot of Mount Kenya at 2081 metres. The forest has Calabus and Sykes monkeys, antelopes, elephant and many bird species. Horse riding and line fishing are possible for an extra cost.

9100/- p.p. sharing full board + guided walks. (Single supplement 11490/-) & child below 3 years half price. Book with Nature Kenya as soon as possible or by **24 November 2006**

Discussion Forum

make your opinion known at www.naturekenya.org/forum

newsletter by email?

It would be a PDF of below 1 MB. Please confirm this preference by sending a note and your current email to office@naturekenya.org
Due to spam filters yahoo, hotmail and other such address will not normally deliver emails sent in bulk, so please do not give email addresses with these extensions. Thank you.

Plan to register a friend or relative as a *member!*

Society offices at the Museum

You will find Nature Kenya offices at the Ford Hall and at a prefabricated building. The prefab building is located next to the Kikuyu homestead and is the office for the Nature Kenya membership shop and subscription desk.

Editorial Team

Editor Catherine Ngarachu
Evening Skies Fleur Ng'weno
Naturalist's Corner Dino Martins
Action Serah Munguti

action

Waterfowl Monitoring

Program in Kenya Preliminary Report for July 2006 Census

Simon Musila, Wanyoike Wamiti, Mwangi Wambugu & Muchai Muchane

kbirds@museums.or.ke

Photo by Michael Davidson

The annual waterfowl census, is part af an international manitaring strategy for wetlands biadiversity, and has been angaing in Kenya far the last 15 years. 100 volunteers were invalved in the waterbird census for July 2006, covering six sites including Ramsar sites - L. Nakuru National Park, L. Bogaria, L. Baringa (partially caunted) and L. Naivasha. This is the first time that the Lakes Naivasha and Baringo have been caunted at this time af year.

Highlights

- A tatal af 561,632 waterbirds of 71 species and 19 families were caunted.
- The most abundant family groups were; Flamingos (541,578), Rails, Gallinues & Caats (6258), Pelicans (2654) and Cormorants & Darters (2290).
- The mast abundant species were the Lesser Flamingo *Phoeniconaias minor* (540,428) followed by Red-Knobbed Coot *Fulica cristata* (6134) and then Great White Pelican *Pelecanus onocrotalus* (2205). L. Nakuru had the largest number of waterbirds (540,224) mainly because it had the largest number of flaminga (536,316) populations.
- A number af dead flamingos were recorded in L. Bogoria (7) and L. Nakuru (1245). Carcasses af the dead birds have already been examined by veterinary officers af Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and tested negative of the Avian Influenza virus strain.
- Same interesting species during the count were Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus infuscatus* (1) each recarded in bath L. Nakuru and L. Naivasha. Western Reef Heron *Egretta gularis schistacea* (1) was recorded in L. Nakuru, while Giant Kingfisher *Megaceryle m. maxima* (6), Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* (4), Madagascar Squacca Heran *Ardeola idae* (6), African Darter *Anhinga rufa* (1), Little Bittern *Ixobrychus minutus* (2) and Black-crawned Night Heran *Nycticorax n. nycticorax* (5) were recorded in L. Naivasha

The African Waterbird Census in Kenya has been a callaborative effort among the Department af Ornithology af the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Wetland Biodiversity Monitoring Scheme (WBMS) and Nature Kenya.

Unsustainable harvesting of East African Sandalwood

John Kimeu

plants@africaonline.co.ke

East African sandalwood *Osyris lanceolata*, is from the Genus *Osyris* which has anly few members, mainly in Africa, Europe and Asia. It is an evergreen tree or shrub 1-6m usually growing in rocky sites where original vegetatian has been cleared. It has very slow growth rate and when young needs shade from ather trees.

This plant has many uses and in Kenya the species is of great medicinal value to several cammunities. The oil extracted from Sandalwood is alsa blended in the praduction af high value perfume and pharmaceutical mounts. The Indian Sandalwood tree has became endangered in recent years, and in an attempt ta curb its possible extinctian the Indian government is trying ta limit the exportation af sandalwoad. There has been a greater market demand far sandalwood from East Africa. From Kenya, the tree is poached, transported to Tanzania where it is semi-processed and illegally exported. The roots are believed ta give the best exude, sa in any harvest, the whale plant is upraoted.

National Taskforce

Convened by the Farest Department (FD) in October 2005, the **Sandalwood National Taskforce** draws membership fram the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Natianal Museums of Kenya, Kenya Farests Warking Graup, and the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service.

Since then a reduction in exploitation of *Osyris lanceolata* in eastern province has been reported fallawing sensitization af KWS and FD afficers, local communities, staff at the Kenya Ports Authority and magistrates. The taskforce is also seeking protection of the tree by means af a presidential decree and is warking towards having it listed under the Convention an International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES) - an international pratacol that protects endangered species.

Poaching spreads to new places

However, with stricter measures enforced in the eastern part af the country, poachers have moved to new frontiers primarily to the Nakuru and Koibatek districts of Rift Valley Province. Pravincial and District Farest Officers in these areas have been notified.

PS. Brackenhurst Arboretum in Tigoni is growing seedings.

H5N1 Update

Surveillance of Palaearctic migrants increased

Avian flu surveillance work in Kenya has received a boost from funds from the World Bank through the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development.

Starting October surveillance work will cover more sites along the bird migratory flyways. New sites will include Lake Victoria, Lake Turkana and the Kenya coast. Work at current surveillance sites like the wetlands in the Rift Valley, Central highlands, and Nairobi area will continue.

To date, targeted and passive surveillance work has revealed that there is no bird flu in Kenya. To report any unusual die-offs in wild or domestic birds call the hotline:

0722 726682

EVENING SKY

Ian Mackay & Fleur Ng'weno

Moon, October 2006

Oct 7th - **Full moon**; Oct 14th - **Last quarter**; Oct 22nd - **New moon**; Oct 29th - **First quarter**

Stars

At sunset the constellation of Scorpius is setting in the southwest. On October 25, its reddish star Antares is just a little north of the crescent moon. At the opposite end of the sky, in the northeast, the "M" shape of the constellation Cassiopeia is rising.

Bright stars in October include Altoir high overhead; Vego lower in the northwest; Fomalhaut high in the south; and Achernar low in the southeast.

Planets

Bright Jupiter is in the west at sunset, near the head of the Scorpion. Tiny Mercury is also visible, a little lower in the evening sky, for the whole of October 2006, its highest elevation being mid month. On October 24th, Mercury is just north of moon.

Saturn is in the morning sky, and Venus and Mars in the glare of the sun.

"We're going down because we're too heavy. We have to throw something overboard, and we've decided it's you."

For more Chris Madden cartoons buy his book "The Beast that ate the Earth" from his website www.chrismadden.org

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Get involved ...

History of the Museum, a new Museum exhibit

Do you have any pictures or information on the Museums of Kenya's history? We would like to hear from you as soon as possible - please email or call 3746090. What about experience or skill in the preparation of a Museum exhibit? We need your help with this History exhibit!

National Museums of Kenya 1st Scientific Conference

Science for Heritage Conservation: Our Heritage, Our Wealth

The National Museums of Kenya will be hosting its 1st Annual Scientific Conference on **the 15th – 17th November 2006 at Kenya Institute of Education, Nairobi**. For more information email nmkconference@yahoo.com or visit www.museums.or.ke

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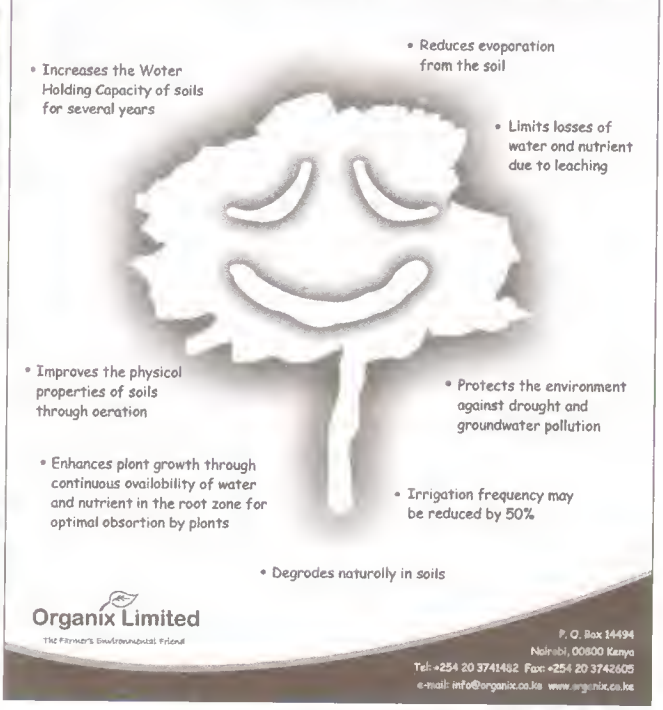
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Up & about

DECLARATION

Nature Kenya does not accept any responsibility whatsoever in respect of negligence of any of its staff, volunteers or members organising the outings/trips or for any loss, injury, death or damage to property.

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIRDWALKS

Bird watching walks at sites in and around Nairobi. Meet at the National Museum car park every Wednesday at 8:45 a.m. Return about 12:30 p.m. *Those who are not members can get temporary membership at Ksh 100 per birdwalk, payable on arrival at the car park.*

TREE WALKS

Guided tree walks in the Arboretum an the second Saturday and last Monday, i.e. **14** and 30 **Oct 06** fram 9:30 a.m. Meet at the Arboretum gate. *Those wha are nat members af FONA or Nature Kenya pay Ksh 100/- fee on arrival at the gate.*

SUNDAY BIRDWATCH

Members meet at the National Museum, Nairobi car park at 9:00 a.m. the third Sunday of every month, **i.e. 15 Oct '06**. The members decide where ta go. Bring lunch

SAMAKI DAYS

Guided fish excursions on the first Thursday, i.e. **5 Oct '06** fram 9:00 a.m - 12:30 p.m. Meet at the Nairobi Museum car park. *Pay Ksh 50/- per persan an arrival*

KINANGOP GUEST HOUSE

Perched on the Kinangop Plateau with incredible views across the Rift Valley, the farm combines tussock-grass pasture, indigenous forest, and attractive gardens. The guesthouse is comfortable and fully furnished. Visitors can enjoy hikes and walks an the farm or go further afield with local guides.

For more information, brochure and nan-member rates please contact Nature Kenya. Guest House rates: Day visit 350/-

MEMBER nos	Overnight	Weekend
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3 pax	4,900/-	7,400/-
4 pax	5,800/-	8,300/-

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On presentation of yaur membership card, you can get this discaunt aff accammadatian (if paying by cash or cheque) at the Driftwood Beachclub. This is a charming beachfront property with great food and service. Contact: <gm@driftwoodclub.com or tel 042 20155

Ngong Road Forest Walks

Ngong Road Forest Sanctuary Trust nature walks held the first and third Saturdays af the month i.e. **7 & 21 Oct '06, at 9:00** a.m. Meet at the stairs leading ta the Restaurant at the Racecourse. Call Ignatius to confirm on 3875207 or 0720 976299.

Lake Victoria Sunset Birders (Kisumu)

The Lake Victoria Sunset Birders organise bird walks at sites in and around Kisumu every Friday of the month. For further details call 057 42952 or 0734 994938 or email lakevictoriasunsetbirders@yahoo.co.uk

Mt Kenya Biodiversity Conservation Group (MKBCG)

The MKBCG organise bird walks to sites around Naro Moru every last Saturday of the month i.e. **28 Oct '06.**
For more information contact 0722 364904, 0733 937115 or 062 62071 Email: mt_kebio@yahoo.ca.uk_

Birding at Kinangop

Friends of Kinangop Plateau arganise birdwalks every third Friday af the manth i.e. **20 Oct 06** at 9:00 a.m around Magumu and Njambini areas. To participate contact Bakari Ng'ang'a on 0721 470215

MARURA NAROK BIRDWATCHERS

A cammunity group near Uaso Narok Swamp, Rumuruti, which organises birdwalks every last Saturday *i.e.* **28 Oct '06.** Call 062 32718 or email olmaisor@africaonline.co.ke

ARABUKO-SOKOKE (COAST)

The Saturday birdwatch with the Arabuka Sokoke Forest Guides Association is on the first Saturday af each month i.e. **7 Oct '06, at 6:30 a.m.** from the Visitor Centre, Gede. Cost 100/- per person. KWS fees now apply (100/- Citizens, 500/- Residents)

FFJ Bird Walk (Coast)

Friends of Fort Jesus birdwalks are held the third Saturday af each month, i.e. **21 Oct '06.**Please call Marlene Reid on (041) 491 648 to confirm

NatureKenya

Yes! *Start* *Renew*
my Nature Kenya membership

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Total		

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